

Leading rural GP quits as doctors hit out at SNP contract

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A leading rural GP has quit a government body after accusing ministers of failing countryside practices.

Dr David Hogg, vice chair of the Rural GP Association of Scotland, told the Scottish Government's Rural Short Life Working Group that the new GP contract was widely opposed by doctors who are not based in urban settings.

He also revealed the findings of a survey which found 82 per cent of rural GPs "believe that the outlook for rural healthcare is worse under the contract", with a third saying services in those areas will have to be "curtailed" as a result.

This is despite the SNP government claiming the GP contract was popular across the country, with First Minister Nicola Sturgeon boasting: "It is good for the profession and it will also be good for patients."

In his letter, Dr Hogg said: "I have become increasingly despondent about us seeing any pragmatic, realistic proposals to reverse the damaging effects of the new GP contract in rural Scotland."

He then added that his duties in the role may not be replaced as "most of my colleagues have found themselves increasingly occupied trying to safeguard local services from the threats created by the new contract".

Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs said:

"Nicola Sturgeon seems to think her GP contract was a rip-roaring success.

"In fact, it's failing the bulk of Scotland's land mass and a fifth of our population.

"GPs are now feeling so strongly about this they are having to step back from positions just to focus on their everyday work.

"It's just the latest example of the SNP obsessing about the Central Belt and paying next to no heed to rural Scotland.

"This letter should ring alarm bells for the SNP government, which is continuing to fail patients right across the country."